

eLearning success at Royal Voluntary Service

Royal Voluntary Service, the national charity aiming to 'Make Britain a great place to grow old', has scooped the Charity Learning Award for 'getting started or restarted on its eLearning journey'. Royal Voluntary Service impressed with its professional, focused approach to launching, evaluating and assessing the impact of its eLearning programme throughout the organisation.



Pictured (L t R): Richard Bragg, Learning and Development Partner, Royal Voluntary Service; Martin Baker, CEO and Founder, The Charity Learning Consortium; Sharon Barwood, Head of Learning and Development, Royal Voluntary Service

“Royal Voluntary Service has taken a really robust approach to restarting its eLearning journey to ensure that it is a success.” *Martin Baker, CEO, Charity Learning Consortium*

eLearning within an organisation can definitely stall, and this was certainly the case at the [Royal Voluntary Service](#) where it had lapsed for several years. Keen to reach its 40,000 strong volunteer network and 2,500 staff in the most cost effective L&D way possible, the charity decided to take a fresh look at what eLearning could offer.

Richard Bragg, Learning & Development Partner at the Royal Voluntary Service explains: "Royal Voluntary Service knows how important training and development is to its staff and volunteers. It operates across Great Britain, so eLearning offers a big saving for the charity while ensuring it offers consistent, quality training - the L&D team can also maintain good training records and provide opportunities for future learning and growth."

A Training Needs Analysis identified key areas where eLearning could help the organisation: initially induction and compliance.



Royal Voluntary Service is one of the largest voluntary organisations in Britain with around 45,000 men and women helping older people to stay independent at home and active in their community.

Partnering with [The Charity Learning Consortium](#) (CLC) for hosting and support, eLearning was launched to the Royal Voluntary Service Cardiff Office in August 2010. It was a great success and 50 people started using eLearning on the day. After further field testing, the eLearning programme was launched across the charity in January this year using the CLC's Moodle platform.

The launch was supported by a thorough internal communications plan to ensure everyone throughout the organisation knew what eLearning offered and how to get started. The L&D team wrote to all staff, gave presentations, promoted the training informally to managers and provided a dedicated 'learning laptop' to each of its 10 regions.

Since January hundreds of different modules have been completed by users at all levels, including volunteers, managers, senior managers and trustees. Most importantly, the learners are using eLearning and love it! Feedback has been resoundingly positive. The L&D team is not sitting still: it's aiming for 80% of staff to complete two mandatory compliance modules by March 2012. The team continues to promote eLearning and is targeting areas of low take up.

Martin Baker, CEO and founder of The Charity Learning Consortium commented: "Royal Voluntary Service has taken a really robust approach to restarting its eLearning journey to ensure that it is a success. The judges were particularly impressed with the way that the L&D team has set itself clear targets - so they will know what success will look like for them - scheduling evaluation of learning as a vital part of the ongoing eLearning process."

Top tips for successful eLearning implementation

From Richard Bragg, Learning & Development partner at Royal Voluntary Service

1. Manage it as a professional project - developing and agreeing the business case, working with stakeholders and communicating throughout. While we identified key stakeholders, spending more time at the start - clearly defining their needs and expectations - would have saved time later on.
2. Be flexible and be prepared to adapt. We learnt to change tack in order to achieve what we wanted. This has included rewriting our first attempt at content, resolving technical issues, and transferring to a Moodle platform.
3. Once you deliver the product, you have to work hard to get people to use it. Almost all the work we have done on this has reaped rewards, but you have to carry on doing this. Working with line managers is particularly beneficial.

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About Royal Voluntary Service



Royal Voluntary Service regularly helps over 100,000 older people to stay independent at home and live how they want in their community, with millions using our hospital-based shops, cafes and support services every year. In an independent report on the charity's impact 90 per cent of the people we helped said we made their life better, 70 per cent said we made it a lot better.

About the Charity Learning Consortium:

Efficiency through collaboration

The [Charity Learning Consortium](#) (CLC) enables cost effective eLearning in the Third Sector. We're the largest group of UK based charities collaborating to make eLearning affordable, with 100 charity members. The CLC makes online learning available to countless volunteers and well over 100,000 Third Sector staff.

Charities join to save money, but also benefit from networking with others with similar goals, sharing resources, ideas and best practice. Members also enjoy special discounts and specialist workshops designed to help them make the most of eLearning.

Collaboration is at the heart of what we do